What is the City doing to improve the effects of storm water?

The City has a long track record of taking serious its responsibility to manage storm water runoff from the City. The City has implemented storm water management strategies to comply with federal and state regulations, protect the Kinnickinnic River, and reduce the adverse effects of development. Storm water ponds, ditches, and swales are key components in storm water management.

Ponds provide runoff rate control, remove sediment from runoff, and replace infiltration lost to impervious surfaces. Each pond you see has a purpose.

Dry ponds are those that have an outlet pipe that allows the pond to drain completely after a rain event. These ponds are effective in reducing the rate at which storm water runs off the land. However, because there is no storage area for sediments, sediments settling to the bottom are generally washed down stream during the next rain event. The Hoffman Park Detention basin is a well-known example of a dry pond.

Wet ponds are designed to have water in them all the time. These ponds reduce the rate of storm water runoff and are very effective in removing sediment from runoff. The permanent water pool slows down runoff allowing sediments in the runoff to settle to the bottom of the permanent pool.

Infiltration basins are specifically designed to allow storm water runoff to soak into the ground, thereby replenishing the groundwater system (which is source of our drinking water) as well as replenishing the springs that feed the Kinnickinnic. Runoff routed to infiltration basins is generally pretreated to remove sediments and prevent plugging of the basin. Additionally, these basins should drain dry within 72 hours, which is less than the time required for mosquito larvae to hatch. Sterling Ponds, Spring Creek Estates, Highview Meadows and the Royal Oaks Subdivisions all have wet ponds and infiltration ponds working in series together.

Drainage ditches and Swales provide routes for storm water to reach ponding facilities. If these areas become obstructed with debris, flooding can occur in upstream areas of the drainage way. Any chemicals and/or debris may wash into downstream ponds and/or the Kinnickinnic River.

What can you do to improve the effects of storm water?

There are simple things we can all do to help improve storm water quality. It does not take large or costly projects to make a difference. In fact, small inexpensive practices can add up to a great deal of improvement. Homeowners can utilize rain barrels on their property, or direct their downspouts to lawn areas instead of impervious areas, or install pervious pavers on their driveway. These are just a couple simple practices that can make a difference. Other river-friendly practices include washing cars in commercial car washes or on the lawn. More information about each of these practices can be found under the storm water section of the website.